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SCIENTIFIC/POLITICALMedicine and Health in the Soviet UnionIX. SCIENTIFIC WORK AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

1. Scientific work and medical research is carried out in all the large clinics and hospitals, and in this respect, the situation in the Soviet Union is similar to that in Europe. The Russians evidently introduced improvements from Europe at the end of the war, and have made progress. In addition to the clinics in the large towns, and of which the one at LENINGRAD is generally agreed to be the best, are a number of medical institutes graded as academies, which provide training to newcomers to the medical profession, but are not comparable with the clinics. It is understandable that the best scientific brains are in the large towns, but new scientific blood cannot be produced to order and the forty years which have elapsed since the revolution have not been enough to solve the problem. Consequently, the practising doctors in the large clinics do not have the knowledge of the scientifically trained doctor, lack confidence, and, even in the large Irkutsk Clinic, have been known to make mistakes when diagnosing. This weakness is also present in the new medical-scientific field, in which the Western World has created a completely new picture since the end of the war. Russian experts are fully aware of this and would like to go ahead as far as they can within the framework of "national science". They do not appear to appreciate, however, just how far they are being left behind by the Western World, but political leaders seek to obtain as much information as possible from abroad, and there is a tendency at the present time to develop cultural relations with other countries by means of which they hope to fill in the gaps in their knowledge.

2. Among the universities and medical institutes which have facilities for training and medical research are:

Tschita	Irkutsk
Omsk	Tomsk
Kargandar (?)	Moscow
Reval	Riga
Kiev	Smolensk
Odessa	Baku
Eriwan	Batumi

Krasnojarks
Swerdlowsk
Leningrad
Kaunas
Stanislaw
Tiflis
Charkow.

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No details of the professors or lecturers at these places are available [redacted]

3. In the surgical branch there are very few completely trained and expert surgeons, but the doctor himself is not to blame for this. He has to learn as he goes about his daily work because the refresher courses he is at liberty to attend every few years are not sufficient to give him the knowledge he needs. For example, the Leningrad Institute often publishes reports on heart operations, but in the whole of Russia there are not more than two or three places where such operations can be performed and these places are out of reach to the greater part of the population. The same applies to lung operations. They are still in the Dr. SAUERBRUCH era, and what lung operations are performed show very bad statistical results and are followed by serious illness. They do a little better with stomach, intestinal and cancer operations. A Russian professor named SPACOKOKOWSKI ^{SPACOKOKOWSKI} has developed an interesting and highly successful method of 'feeding' abdominal operation cases by passing a liquid meal into the intestines about 40 to 50 cm. below the place of the operation. The meal is composed of some 500 gr. of sweetened cream enriched with 50 gr. pure butter, 100 gr. grape sugar and 3-4 egg yokes. The moment before the meal is to be fed into the intestines 100 gr. of 96% alcohol is stirred into it. The intestines are then punctured with a hollow needle which is attached to a tube and funnel, through which the meal is poured in. The puncture is afterwards closed with a couple of stitches. This method has three distinct advantages:

- a) The patient does not require any more food for at least 24 hours after the operation as the meal contains about 3,500 calories;
- b) the intestines start to work immediately;
- c) the patient is intoxicated by the alcohol, suffers less pain than usual and lies quiet for some hours after the operation. This means that less narcotics can be used - an important factor because narcotics have an unfavourable effect on the working of the intestines.

Essential drugs can be incorporated in the meals fed to patients whose hearts or blood systems are weak. From the practical point of view the method is excellent because the recovery period appears to be much easier than would be the case if the method were not used.+

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They are now using a 1/2% novocain solution for treating 'blockade' but a clear picture of the results was not obtainable. Their bone and joint operations are badly carried out and the bullet wounds and festering bone damage suffered by soldiers in the war were badly healed functionally, and in the majority of cases were still discharging. They make unsuccessful attempts to cure such cases with penicillin but are completely ignorant of the effects of drugs in the Antibiotika group. Flesh transplantation (fresh cell treatment) appears to be becoming popular and one of the strongest supporters is the Odessa eye specialist, ~~FILATOV~~ ^{FILATOV}, ~~FILATOW~~, ^{FILATOV} who claims that placenta which has been properly prepared can be used with success in certain eye diseases.+ The widespread use by the Western World of fresh cell therapeutics, their effect and the production of fresh cell extraction, are medical factors about which the Russians know surprisingly little.

5. In the branch of internal medicine and with only limited effect so far, they seek to arrive at functional diagnoses and functional therapeutics on the basis of their relative pathological intuition. It would be incorrect to say that the work of the Russians in this field is bad, because it is still in the undeveloped stage in European countries. They pay particular attention to diseases affecting the heart or blood system because they are very prevalent, particularly among the younger generation. The Russian view is that there are three main reasons for this:

- a) The unrest, nervousness and danger of their everyday life;
- b) The terrible demands made on them by the abnormal climate;
- c) Excessive use of alcohol and nicotine.

6. Working along lines developed at the Leningrad Clinic, they have introduced sleep therapeutics for cases of genuine 'Hypertonie'. By using a barbitur acid preparation they put the patients to sleep for about four weeks, only waking them up two or three times for food. There is no doubt / that

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they have to use small pieces of placenta, as they have not yet found a way to extract the blood as has been done in Europe. The small piece is inserted into the patient's body through a specially made cut and so comes into direct contact with the blood stream.

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that the blood pressure drops as the result of this treatment, but also, no doubt about it rising again when the patient returns to his normal life. The Russian theory that the spastic reflexes are interrupted, to be replaced by new reflexes, as PAVLOW claims, is hardly acceptable.

7. The Russians are very perturbed about tuberculosis which is widespread and appears to be much more prevalent in the Soviet Union than it is in Europe. They speak of a special sensitivity to the disease, especially among the yellow races, and believe it can be traced back to a lack of immunity to contagious diseases. For this reason there is growing support for the 'Calmette' inoculations which are given to children during their first year of life. The effects and results of this treatment are not known. They favour two preparations for the treatment of TB, particularly in the initial stages. These are streptomycin and para-aminosalicylic acid, and the results are good. The toxic appearance is quickly overcome, temperatures go down and the patient feels much better and therefore has more appetite. They are also using another type of treatment, which does not appear to have been studied in European countries. They have set up a number of rather primitive convalescent homes, particularly on the north side of the Altai mountains, where TB patients are fed on mare's milk. Their view is that the fat content of the milk of the wild horses in the Steppes area possesses special chemical qualities which effect the protective coating of fat on the TB bacillus and make it easier for the natural immunisation strength of the patient's body to tackle them. There is a sort of medieval belief in miracles when it comes to treating the more important diseases - a belief which has its roots in the national medicines of INDIA and CHINA. For example, they claim in their writings that wild grass seed, of which there is a large variety, possesses certain healing properties, although the seeds have never been examined to see if this is so. They also report on a root called Tschen-Tschen, which is claimed to possess all the essential qualities for curing crippled organs. An interesting point about this is that the root is rare, and the Taiga and Tundra hunters who sometimes come across it sell it for a high price to private buyers.

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8. In most branches of medicine treatment is limited by the lack of reliable material and medicines and by the lack of experience of the badly trained doctors and surgeons. This is particularly applicable to diseases of the eyes, ears, nose and throat, for which there is a great shortage of specialists brought on by a shortage of lecturers and a consequent lack of training facilities. The poor quality of optical and accoustical apparatus has a marked effect and the treatment of eye diseases in particular is adversely affected by a shortage of optical lenses. Inflammation of the ears, nose and throat is a common complaint for which the treatment is bad.

9. However, there is one branch of medical research in which the Soviet Union seems to be going ahead, and that is in the study and production of drugs for improving the physical performance of the human body. Their interest in this field probably arose from their desire to make Russian athletes the best in the world, out of which was developed a system - or at least the nucleus of a system - for increasing the natural norm of the human body. In their study of the human body they have reached the conclusion that if a person is ill, it is not just one organ which is not working properly, but the whole system. It ^{has} been laid down, therefore, that all persons who enter hospital will be given a complete check-up and the results recorded. When the examination is being carried out they study the sick organ, the effect which the sick organ is having, or has had on the rest of the system, and, in turn, the effect this has had on the functional ability of the individual organs and the system as a whole. Although a complete examination is neither possible, under the existing health system, nor even feasible, because no scientific method has yet been developed for examining the whole organism of the human body, the records which the system is able to produce should, nevertheless, be of immense value, not only in the treatment of the patient but also, in the case of the Soviet Union, in the medical categorisation of the population.

In some hospitals which are well-directed, genuine efforts are being made to carry out a check-up on each patient and to record the results. For example, when a patient with an infected "angina" enters hospital, he is given a thorough examination both on arrival and departure. All the / known

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known methods, including X-ray, are used and at the end of it all the physical ability of the patient's body is recorded. This, of course, forces the doctor signing the release certificate to place the patient in the medical category for which he is genuinely qualified. The examinations, if carefully carried out, often reveal a disease or illness which the patient himself never suspected he had. Such cases confirm the Soviet views on relative-pathology. For example, if they discover a case of high blood pressure or a bad heart they claim that the trouble has been building up for a long time, and that because the trouble has had a chance to get a good hold, the treatment of it is consequently more complicated and less likely to succeed. Relative-pathology has its critics in the Soviet Union because it has not been as completely examined as the cellular and organ pathology of ^{VIRKHOV} VIRCHOW. But the fact that it is a comparatively new idea does not preclude its long-term potentialities, although the Soviet health system is hardly the right one for exploiting them. Study of the performance of the human body in the Western World appears to have been confined so far to the production of one or two drugs for athletes, but as there is no real economic incentive in this type of research it is hardly likely that its development will be either rapid or widespread. In the Soviet Union, however, it is a matter of general policy to get the maximum performance out of the human body, so that the chances of progress being made there will hardly be deterred by lack of interest or support.

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